



Washington County Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by Washington County

2020
WASHINGTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**Recommended for Approval by
Washington County Planning and Zoning Commission**

**Adopted by
Board of Washington County Commissioners
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INTRODUCTION

Idaho state law requires that each city and county prepare and adopt a comprehensive, long range plan to identify and plan for present and future needs of the community as well as address growth and development of land within the community.

Idaho Code §67-6508 authorizes local governments to prepare comprehensive plans for their communities. According to the statute, the plan must consider previous and existing conditions, trends, desirable goals and objectives, or desirable future situations for each planning component. The plan should include the following components, unless the plan specifies reasons why a particular component is unneeded.

- Property Rights
- Population
- School Facilities
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Natural Resources
- Hazardous Areas
- Public Services, Facilities, and Utilities
- Transportation
- Recreation
- Special Areas or Sites
- Housing
- Community Design
- Implementation
- National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors

This plan is organized around these chapters, with one exception, the National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors chapter has been omitted, as it is not applicable to Washington County.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

This plan sets forth the goals and objectives determined by the citizens of Washington County to guide growth and development decisions in Washington County. These carefully conceived goals reflect many hours of discussion and contemplation on Washington County's future and the desires of the residents. They are intended to provide and protect the standard of living for residents and visitors alike and to set tasks that should be accomplished to achieve this quality.

It is the intent of the Washington County Commissioners to use the Plan as a framework which will promote sound land development, a safe and healthy living environment and a successful economic climate, while maintaining and protecting personal property rights.

Due to current and anticipated growth, it is felt that there is a need to properly plan for and deal with the 'where' and 'how' of growth in Washington County. The rights of the landowner who makes a living from agriculture are those that are the most threatened by growth and development. The very soil that is relied upon for producing sources of food is also the soil that is most readily converted to housing at the

present time. It is the desire of the county to provide a solution to this problem that can best serve all agricultural, industrial and residential entities the ability to co-exist and enjoy the lifestyles that each desire. Washington County has learned from the challenges that have faced other communities and understands the importance of orderly and responsible growth.

The Plan will be used as a “working” document, referred to in each land use and growth decision made. It will be responsive to the ever-changing environment of the community and will be subject to amendment to address those changes. It will continue to be a truly public document, requiring full public participation in its continued use and future updates. Each year the Washington County Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of County Commissioners will review the Plan and update it as necessary to meet the needs of the county. The authority to plan and regulate land use is derived from the Idaho Constitution. In Idaho, our enabling legislation is the Local Land Use Planning Act (LLUPA), which stipulates that a Comprehensive Plan shall address at least 14 required elements with the basic intent of accomplishing the overall goals listed above.

Amendments to the plan will follow the guidelines set in Idaho Code 67-6509.

POPULATION

Nature of Growth

Figure 1 shows Washington County population trends since 1980. These trends generally follow each other except for the city of Cambridge. Cambridge has seen a steady decline in its population since 1980.

FIGURE 1
Population Trends

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017
Washington County	8,803	8,550	9,977	10,105	9,996
Cambridge	428	374	360	333	257
Midvale	205	136	176	162	218
Weiser	4,771	4,571	5,343	5,464	5,325

Source: 2010 Census and 2017 American Community Survey

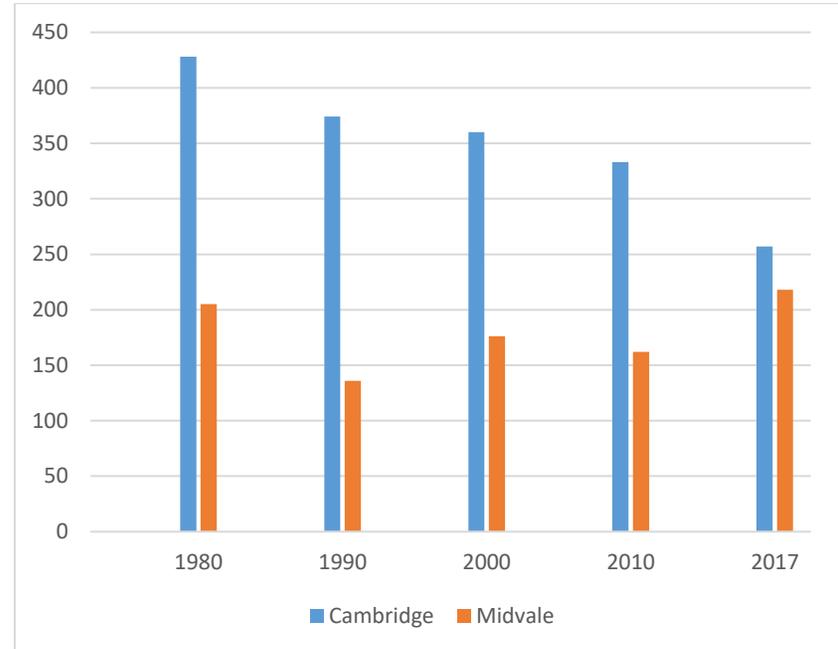
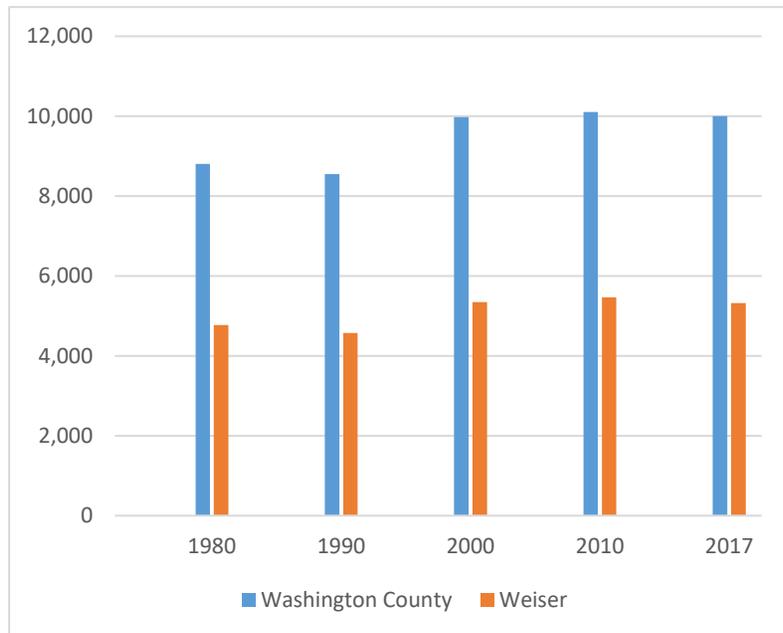


Figure 2 shows population trends through the annual growth rates of the county and its municipalities. All three communities and the county as a whole dropped in population in the eighties. The population in the city of Cambridge has continued to decline since 1990, while the city of Midvale has seen their population have a couple of substantial increases since 1990. From 1970 to 2005 Washington County had an annual average growth rate of 0.8%.

FIGURE 2
Annual Growth Rates

	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2017
Washington County	-2.90%	16.69%	1.28%	-1.08%
Cambridge	-12.62%	-3.74%	-7.50%	-22.82%
Midvale	-33.66%	29.41%	-7.95%	34.57%
Weiser	-4.19%	16.89%	2.26%	-2.54%

Source: 2010 Census and 2017 American Community Survey

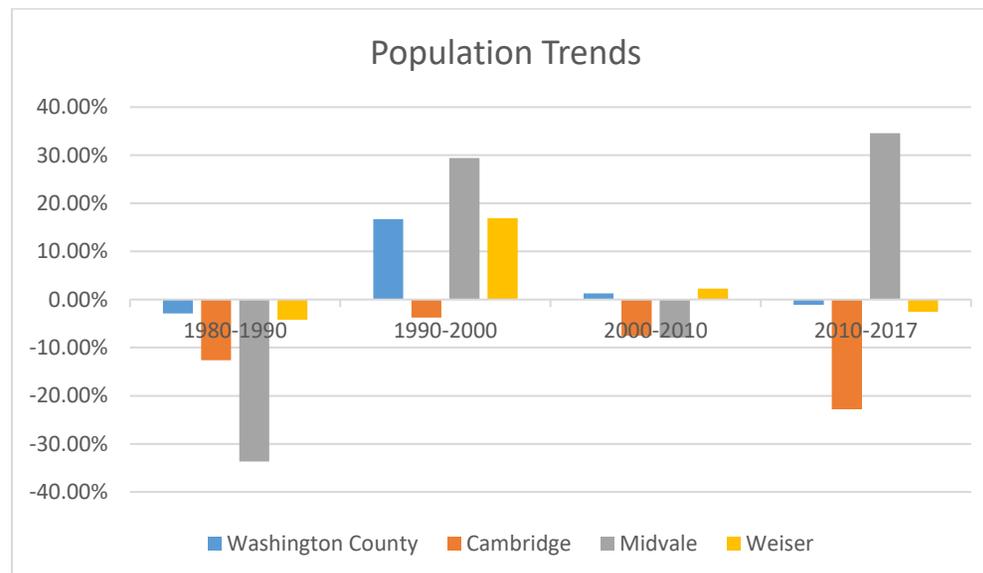
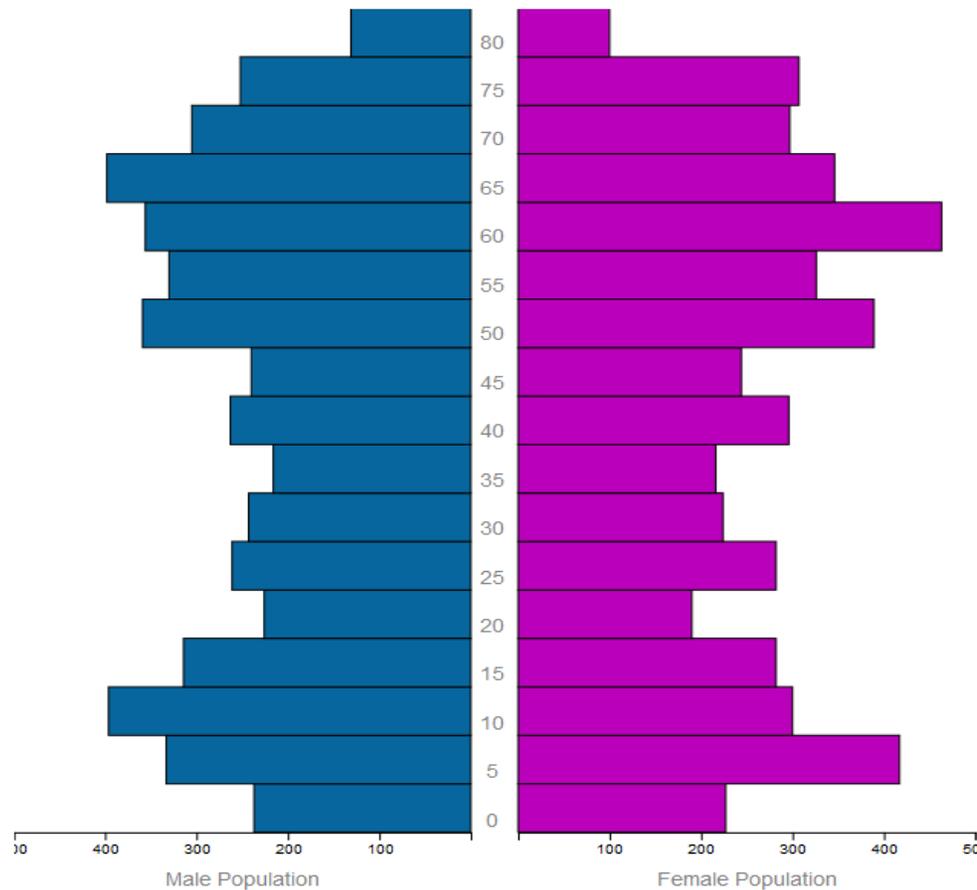


Figure 3 shows the demographic makeup of Washington County’s population according to the 2017 American Community Survey.

FIGURE 3
Washington County Demographic Data

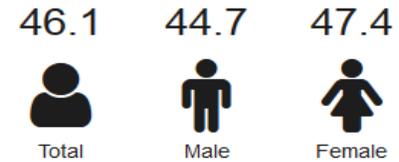
Washington County, Idaho Population Pyramid 2019



Data via US Census (2017 ACS 5-Year Survey): [Table S0101](#)

Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Washington County, Idaho Median Age



Washington County, Idaho Adults

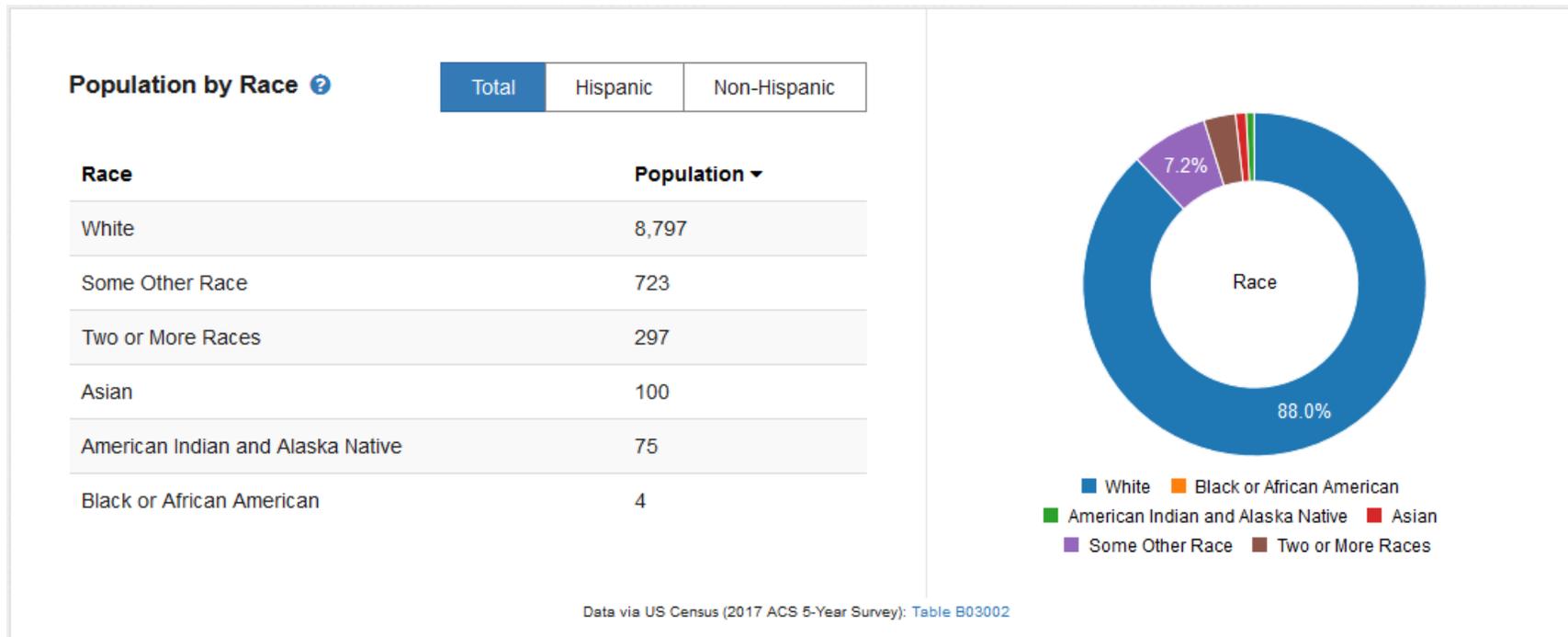
There are 7,658 adults, (2,366 of whom are seniors) in Washington County, Idaho.

Washington County, Idaho Age Dependency



Washington County, Idaho Sex Ratio

Female	5,056	50.58%
Male	4,940	49.42%



Source: 2017 American Community Survey

According to the 2010 Census, Idaho has 12.4% of its population in the 65 or older category, while Washington County has 20.5%. The percentage of the population younger than 18 in Washington County is 24.7% while the state has 27.4%.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

Private property means all property protected by the Fifth Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and Section 13, Article I of the Constitution of the State of Idaho. In part, the Fifth Amendment states, “nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.” The Fourteenth Amendment states in part that, “No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”



Property in Washington County

Private property rights have four aspects:

1. To own property
2. To use property
3. To exclude others from the property
4. To sell or dispose of property

This component provides an analysis of provisions that may be necessary to ensure that land use policies, restrictions, conditions and fees do not violate private property rights, adversely impact property values or create unnecessary technical limitations on the use of property.

Everyone should have the freedom to make full use of their property, while taking into consideration the rights of property of other persons, and complying with the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of planning and zoning is to assure that all regulations and actions involving property rights are fair to all those involved.

The government may properly regulate or limit the use of private property, pursuant to established laws in Idaho Code, based upon its authority and responsibility to:

1. Protect public health, safety and welfare
2. Establish building codes, safety standards or sanitary requirements
3. Establish land use planning and zoning
4. Abate public nuisances
5. Terminate illegal activities
6. Exercise the right of eminent domain. Private property may be taken for public use, but not until just compensation, to be ascertained in the manner prescribed by law, is paid.

However, if the government infringes upon any of the fundamental property rights, such activity could constitute a taking, requiring compensation. In a taking assessment, courts generally consider both the purpose of the government's action and the degree to which it limits an owner's property rights.

The purpose of the Planning and Zoning Commission is to ensure that all regulatory land use activities are properly administered in accordance with federal and state law to include the Idaho Local Land Use Planning Act of 1975, as amended, the Attorney General's Regulatory Takings Act Guidelines and Washington County planning and zoning ordinances.

Washington County wishes to ensure that land use policies, ordinances, restrictions, conditions, and fees do not violate private property rights, adversely impact private property values or create unnecessary technical limitations upon the use of the property which will constitute an unconstitutional taking of private property rights. In order to evaluate each related action, the county will ask the following questions, as

required by state law (Attorney General’s Checklist) of that action.

1. Does the regulation or action result in the permanent or temporary physical occupation of all or a portion of private property?
2. Does the regulation or action require a property owner to dedicate a portion of property or grant an easement without full compensation?
3. Does the regulation deprive the owner of all economically viable uses of all or any part of the property?
4. Does the regulation have a significant impact on the landowner’s economic interest?
5. Does the regulation deny a fundamental attribute of ownership?
6. Does it deny the right to possess, exclude others or dispose of all or a portion of the property?
7. Does the regulation or action serve the same purpose that would be served by directly prohibiting the use or action; and does the condition imposed substantially advance that purpose?

If any question above is answered in the affirmative, the action being taken should be revisited and reconsidered.

GOAL – It shall be the policy of Washington County to protect and ensure private property values and rights within the accepted confines of the national, state, and local laws.

Objectives:

1. To review all land use decisions, policies, procedures, and ordinances keeping in mind the county’s policy as stated above. To encourage the fullest use of the land in Washington County, as long as such use is compatible with existing surrounding uses.
2. To adopt the Attorney General’s checklist, asking and answering the seven questions (as stated above), to ensure that all actions concerning private property are within the confines of the law.
3. To recognize the value of all land uses and protect the right to those uses, in recognition of health, safety and welfare standards and in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.
4. To recognize that surrounding property owners also have the right for protection of their property rights and values.

5. To adopt the Nuisance Waiver, protecting existing agricultural uses and rights, as allowed under state law.
6. To provide for protection of canal and irrigation systems.
7. To encourage the Planning and Zoning Commission and County Commissioners to remain up to date on takings issues and legislation.
8. To ensure that application fees for development are based on the actual cost of processing applications.
9. To ensure that standards on development are equitable and applied equally.
10. To ensure protection of legally existing uses and facilities through ordinances addressing non-conforming status. (See page 29–Existing Uses).

SCHOOLS

Washington County has three public school districts within its boundaries. These are the Weiser School District #431, the Cambridge School District #432 and the Midvale School District #433. The school facilities are located in the three communities that bear the district names. In addition, the Payette School District offers services to some southeastern Washington County students, and the Weiser School District offers services to the Annex, Oregon area.

Washington County has seen a slow decline in school enrollment numbers since the mid-nineties with a slight increase in recent years.

School Year	Enrollment
2008-2009	1882
2009-2010	1887
2010-2011	1875
2011-2012	1827
2012-2013	1815
2013-2014	1838
2014-2015	1749
2015-2016	1782
2016-2017	1814
2017-2018	1811
2018-2019	1835

From 2008 to 2019 the districts saw a decrease of 47 children, a -2.5% change in enrollment. There is one small private school in the Cambridge School District and some students are being home-schooled. There is a Head Start program in Washington County located at Pioneer Elementary School in Weiser, operated by the Western Idaho Community Action Program. In addition, there are several small private daycare and pre-school services available including the El Venadito Head Start.

Weiser School District

The Weiser School District serves the western part of the county including the City of Weiser. It is the largest district in the county, serving 86% of the school-aged children.

From 2008 to 2019, the Weiser district saw a -1.6% change in enrollment.

School Year	Enrollment
2008-2009	1601
2009-2010	1612
2010-2011	1612
2011-2012	1586
2012-2013	1587
2013-2014	1579
2014-2015	1502
2015-2016	1524
2016-2017	1565
2017-2018	1554
2018-2019	1575

Source: Weiser School District Office

The school buildings are in good condition. The District has embarked upon a regular maintenance schedule in an attempt to keep the facilities in good operating condition. All buildings are ADA accessible and are safe for continued use. Future expansion plans depend upon enrollment. In 1994 the district completed a \$3.25 million classroom project and reroofed the high school and middle school facilities in 1996. In 2017 the district added a \$700,000 early childhood expansion at Pioneer School.

The students of the Weiser School District are served by a district-owned bus system which uses twelve regular route buses covering 521 miles a day. The majority of these miles are on county roads.

The Washington County Road Department and the Weiser Valley Highway District work closely with the district to maintain safe bus routes under all conditions. As homes are built throughout the county, the school board is faced with the issue of providing transportation for more and more children. Highway 95, the major north/south highway in Idaho, passes within 100 feet of Park Elementary School (serves grades 4 and 5). The School District and ITD have attempted to provide the safest possible environment around the school.

The Weiser School District consists of five school sites and one district office and bus garage site. The eight buildings owned by the district are all within city limits of Weiser. Almost one-half of the students attending Weiser schools reside outside the city limits. The Weiser School District owns 22 cultivated acres to the north and northwest of Weiser High School. The land is being reserved for future school expansion.

The enrollment of the Weiser School District and plans for expansion are dependent upon the economy.

Cambridge School District

The Cambridge School District serves the northern part of the county including the City of Cambridge. It is the second largest district in the county, serving 7% of the school aged children.

From 2008 to 2019, the Cambridge district saw a -12.2% change in enrollment.

School Year	Enrollment
2008-2009	148
2009-2010	146
2010-2011	142
2011-2012	122
2012-2013	120
2013-2014	127
2014-2015	114
2015-2016	132
2016-2017	130
2017-2018	137
2018-2019	130

Source: Idaho Department of Public Schools

Midvale School District

The Midvale School District serves the central part of the county including the City of Midvale. It is the third largest district in the county, serving 7% of the school aged children.

From 2008 to 2019, the Midvale district saw a 2.3% change in enrollment.

School Year	Enrollment
2008-2009	133
2009-2010	129
2010-2011	121
2011-2012	119
2012-2013	108
2013-2014	132
2014-2015	133
2015-2016	126
2016-2017	119
2017-2018	120
2018-2019	130

Source: Midvale School District Office

GOAL – Washington County shall work with the school districts within the county to ensure the safety of students on their way to and from school.

Objectives:

1. Student pedestrians will have safe access to schools. This will be ensured through the proper use of traffic control devices, speed limits, and enforcement.
2. Encourage the coordination of bus routes with the county to ensure safety.

GOAL –Washington County supports efforts to provide the best possible educational opportunities provided by the individual school districts.

Objectives:

1. The county and school districts will continue to coordinate the joint use of facilities that taxpayers have paid for.
2. Encourage the coordination of all jurisdictions within the county in planning and financing capital improvement needs, including bond elections.
3. The county and school districts will continue to coordinate the future siting of school district facilities, and may develop a map to show future sites.
4. As the school districts conduct facility and land needs assessments, they will keep the county informed and involved.
5. Encourage private or alternative schools to coordinate with the county.

GOAL – Washington County will consider all impacts that new development might have on the schools within the county.

Objectives:

1. Development in the county will consider provisions for safe access to and from school, recreation areas, and open spaces. This might include sidewalks, bike paths, greenways and other alternate transportation routes.
2. The county will present all development plans to the proper school district for review and comment early enough in the process so that safety and other changes might be easily made at little expense pursuant to Idaho Code Title 67, Chapter 65. If growth is determined to negatively impact school facilities, solutions need to be discussed and pursued.
3. The subdivision ordinance will be amended to reflect standards for open space, alternate transportation routes for school children, bus turnouts and other safety features.
4. The Planning and Zoning Commission will consider school building capacity numbers and transportation costs as part of the information used to approve development and zoning changes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Washington County encourages the efforts of the communities within the county in their pursuit of positive economic development.

The county promotes all efforts to attract and recruit new business, the utilization of available economic development programs and the expansion of current businesses.

Washington County recognizes the following specific areas, their requirements and goals:

AGRICULTURE

The agricultural base is important in the county. Economic development will not infringe on traditional agricultural requirements such as water and grazing rights. With the cooperation of the county's agricultural community, the county will encourage all related economic development efforts in an attempt to promote new crops and the introduction and/or expansion of ecologically sound agricultural processing industries and value added products. The county will continue to actively promote, protect, encourage and maintain all sectors of the local economy, including and especially agriculture.



Farming – west of Weiser

MINING

The county should promote responsible mineral, gas and/or oil exploration, extraction and/or development in a way that is harmonious with existing land uses, as the national economy dictates the need for local natural resources. Mining, gas and/or oil interests must follow local, state and federal laws and regulations.

FORESTRY

The county should continue to promote the development of new forest product businesses and work closely with public and private entities that engage in the production and harvest of our county's forest assets. The county should ensure that recreational access, recreational activities and historical levels of grazing will continue to benefit from our forest systems.

TOURISM

The county should promote tourism by being actively involved with local organizations that provide tourism support. The county will actively promote tourism assets such as museums, county fairs, outside recreation, and annual events like the National Oldtime Fiddlers' Contest. The county supports all efforts to actively recruit new business and events related to tourism.

RECREATION

The county should promote recreational growth which includes access to federally managed lands. These lands will remain open for balanced multiple use, including historical and /or customary uses. The county should assist in the development of recreational related business/industry.

WILDLIFE & THE ENVIRONMENT

Washington County is blessed with numerous and diverse ecosystems. Because of this, outdoor opportunities are many and varied. People seeking quality outdoor experiences have a positive effect on the economy of the county. Wildlife and the environment shall be an important consideration in all land use decision-making processes. Critical habitat for wildlife "species of special concern" such as the Greater Sage Grouse will require additional consideration. Wildlife, wild lands and the environment are valuable natural resources and shall be protected and promoted by the county. Washington County should promote the local and state wildlife plans to protect and preserve the wildlife as well as local agriculture.

INDUSTRY

The county should actively recruit new, ecologically sound industry. The county should encourage the growth of businesses and industry that provide medium to higher wage jobs. The county will encourage home occupations and telecommuting, allowing residents to work from their homes, within standards set forth in county ordinances.

RETAIL

The county should encourage, through local Chambers of Commerce, expansion of current retail businesses and the introduction of new retail businesses into appropriate areas of the county.

INFRASTRUCTURE

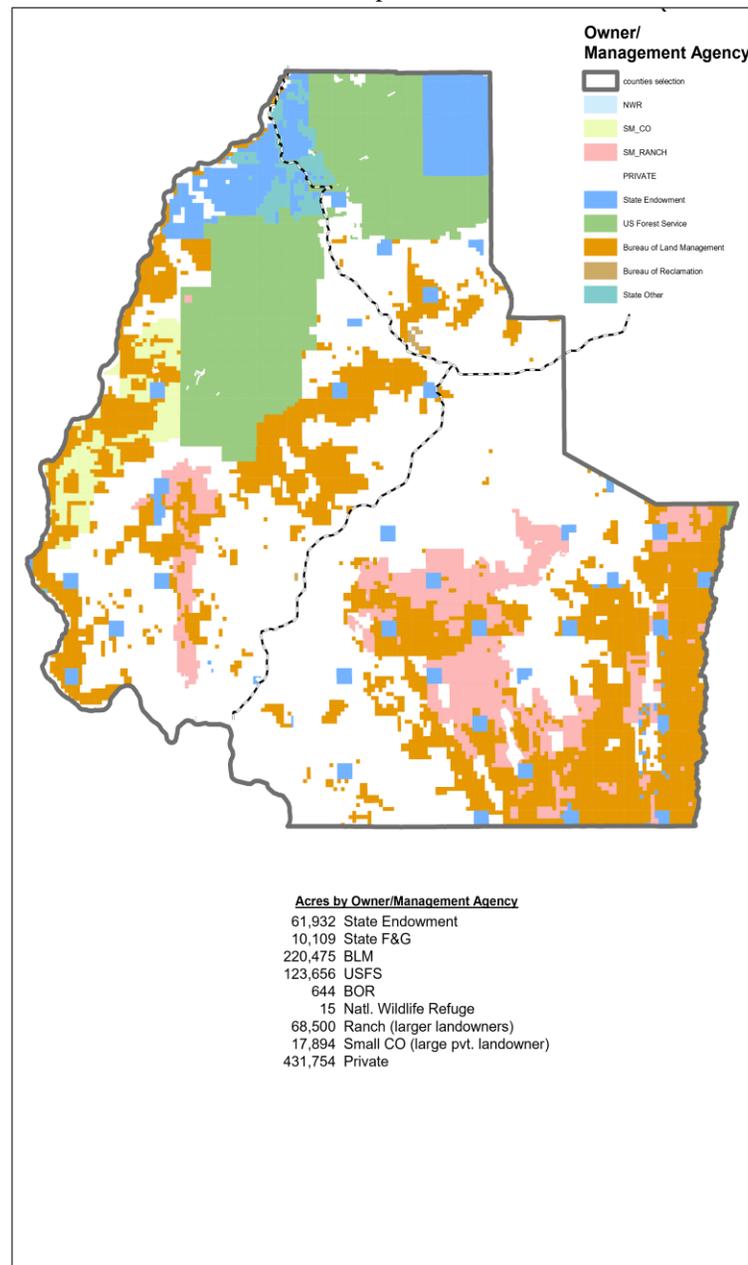
The county should promote local governments in the upgrading of infrastructure in their communities. The county will work with organizations to assist communities with applying for and receiving block grants for infrastructure repair and upgrade.

In conclusion, Washington County will work to increase employment opportunities and the tax base through expansion of current businesses and the recruitment of new job-providing entities by reducing and simplifying regulations. The county recognizes the importance of agriculture, but also strives to diversify its economic base. Many varied and different economic categories should be included in any effort to enhance and improve economic development.

Washington County is a great place to live. The lifestyle and quality of life in Washington County are valuable commodities and should be marketed as such. All economic development efforts should advertise and accentuate the many positive aspects of the county.

LAND USE

Source: Idaho Department of Lands



Washington County is located in southwestern Idaho, along the Oregon border. U.S. Highway 95 runs the length of the county, bringing tourism and other economic activity to Washington County. The county supports a variety of land ownership as depicted in the table above. The federal and state governments control 44.6% or 416,831 acres of Washington County land, while 55.4% or 518,148 acres of the land is privately owned.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

The management of historical and customary agricultural and range land uses is important to the citizens of Washington County who base a large portion of their economy on this use. Historically, the primary force of the Washington County economy has been derived from timber, agriculture and agriculturally related activities. Maintaining viable tracts of prime agricultural land, rangeland, and timberland is a goal for local area leaders.



Ranching/Dry Land Grazing – East of Weiser

The Agricultural Land Use is suitable for all types of agricultural and range operations, including any residential or accessory buildings necessary for operation of the agricultural use. Related industrial land uses may be allowed after careful consideration of its impact on surrounding agricultural uses. Commercial uses tied to recreation, mineral and gas/oil exploration and development, tourism or other neighborhood needs may be allowed under a special use permit after review of potential impacts on the surrounding areas.

Farming and ranching are critical components of the overall economy of Washington County. The county seeks to protect agricultural land.



Row Crop Farming with Indianhead Mountain in the background - Weiser



Harvesting Onions

Because of the wide range of soils, conditions and production rates in the county, lands may be rated for development (other than agricultural use) based upon the following factors (not in order of priority):

1. Potential crop productivity
2. Availability of irrigation
3. Grazing potential
4. Environmental factors
5. Availability of public services
6. Availability of adequate transportation systems
7. Availability of potable water

Land within the Agricultural Land Use may then be designated through the Zoning Map as agricultural land to be preserved, marginal agricultural land, and land available for other residential, commercial or industrial development.

AREAS OF CITY IMPACT

Respect for existing agricultural uses within the Area of City Impact is a priority. Weiser, Cambridge and Midvale are still of the size and inclination to allow for a mixture of larger agricultural and various mixed use parcels. These lands are considered to be in a changing environment where public facilities and services will be necessary before intensive urbanization should occur. However, heavy industrial uses may be allowed only if conditions are met that ensure the health and safety of citizens, natural resources, and the preservation of the value and aesthetics of surrounding properties. The use of development agreements, as provided under state law, will be encouraged in all areas of the county.

AGRICULTURAL TRANSITIONAL LAND USE

Agricultural transitional land use has been established to provide a transition between those areas in the county that are agricultural and those areas that may be suitable for other types of development that are compatible with agricultural uses.

This land use is suitable for single family residential living and rural subdivisions, including manufactured homes meeting certain building requirements. The primary purpose of this designation is to provide opportunities for the development of residential neighborhoods in rural settings that meet the housing demand of the population, preferably in a way that would preserve the agricultural use of the land. All development shall meet all applicable health and safety regulations. This designation is best located near community centers or along major transportation routes.

The county will endeavor to establish development zones for future rural residential development. These development zones will be established on marginal agricultural land with close access to major transportation routes. Potential development in these zones will be given special positive consideration during land use consideration processes.

Other uses allowed under this designation include appropriate agricultural and forest uses, public or semi-public facilities compatible with agricultural and residential needs, and necessary utility installations. Developers of multiple lot subdivisions shall be required to prove water availability and quality for both domestic and irrigation where applicable to all proposed residential lots before development is allowed to proceed. Quality standards must coincide with those already established for arsenic, nitrates, etc. Densities will not exceed those allowed by sufficient septic system and groundwater quality and quantity studies.

Existing water rights and appurtenances are to be respected, protected and maintained in any process of development. The effects of proposed development on existing water availability and quality are to be carefully addressed during any land use decision-making process.

No residential development will be allowed without proper access to a public street or road. It shall be the responsibility of the developer to meet county standards. Any new road that accesses county, highway district or state roads must be approved by the proper jurisdiction.

Commercial uses designed to serve agricultural needs or residential needs in the immediate area may be allowed only after a rezone or the granting of a special use permit, and the review and recommendation of the County Planning and Zoning Commission.

All land use decision-making processes will include consideration for wildlife, wildlife habitat and the environment.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Commercial land use in Washington County has traditionally been located along the state highways and in incorporated areas, with the primary use to serve travelers passing through the area, serving the consumer needs of the residents, and serving agricultural needs. It is the desire of the citizens of Washington County to continue such uses along or within the area of highway corridors. The county will encourage commercial development within city limits.

INDUSTRIAL

It is the policy of the county to allow and encourage industrial development in the appropriate industrial zones. The county will encourage the recruitment of clean industries that complement the county. The majority of industrial uses should be located within areas of city impact, where city services are more likely to be available.

Industrial uses shall be confined to the industrial zones within the county unless agriculturally related and approved for the Agricultural Land Use Area.

The county will encourage the grouping of industrial uses in land developed as an industrial park.

PREFERRED AREAS OF SPECIFIED USE

The county shall establish preferred areas of specified use to accommodate future development. These areas would border the main traffic arterials, primarily along Highways 95 and 71. Property within these preferred areas of specific use would be given preferential consideration in all land use decision-making processes, most specifically rezone requests. To fulfill the requirements of this preferred area designation, property within these areas should be marginal agricultural land and/or non-irrigated or non-historically irrigated and non-actively farmed or ranched. Actual development within these preferred areas will still require the approval of Washington County rezone, subdivision and land use processes.

OTHER LAND USES

The county shall establish special land use categories to address unique characteristics of the land or environment. This should include identifying federally managed and state lands, floodplain areas, and areas of critical concern such as historical sites, geographic features, wildlife areas, and natural resource areas.

These are discussed more fully in the Natural Resource, Hazardous Areas, and Significant Sites elements of the plan.

In all land use decision making, detailed consideration will be given to wildlife, the environment, private property, and possible adverse effects the potential development might have thereon.

EXISTING USES

It is recognized that certain conforming uses have existed prior to the establishment of zoning, which may not conform to present requirements of that land use. Such uses shall be allowed to continue to exist under the conditions set forth in the county zoning ordinance.

GOAL – To anticipate and provide for a variety of land uses in Washington County that meet the needs of the citizens while recognizing the importance of enhancing agriculture opportunities.

Objectives

1. To maintain the agricultural land as a resource, to protect water, land and various infrastructures.

2. To identify the best uses of land within the county and to continually update the zoning ordinances and maps to reflect these uses. Best uses shall be determined by the land suitability for agricultural pursuits, housing, commercial or industrial potential and to develop standards to ensure compatible development.
3. To encourage high density residential growth, and commercial and industrial developments within established areas of city impact.
4. To respect the uses already existing within the county.
5. To develop zoning and subdivision ordinances to carry out these policies and others listed within the Comprehensive Plan.
6. Observe state and local health and safety regulations.
7. To discourage, through the zoning ordinance, the mixing of incompatible uses that may be detrimental to surrounding properties or uses.
8. To provide balance and due process within the zoning application process.
9. To work with the health authorities in identifying and determining appropriate development standards for areas within Washington County.
10. To include wildlife, wildlife habitat and the environment in all land use decisions. To acknowledge that the aforementioned are assets to the county, deserving our consideration and protection.

TRANSPORTATION

Washington County's major source of transportation is vehicular. The county also has a major railroad for commerce running through it, two airports, and typical alternate transportation opportunities such as bike paths or walking trails. Despite these alternative means of transportation, their dependence upon the highway and local street systems remains strong.

Washington County is primarily served by US Highway 95, which runs from the southern end to the northeastern end of the county and passes through the three incorporated municipalities of Weiser, Midvale, and Cambridge. State Highway 71 provides access to Hells Canyon and Oregon from Cambridge.

According to the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), Washington County's biggest traffic volume is on U.S. Hwy 95, carrying 6,800 daily vehicle units south of Weiser, 3,800 north of Weiser and 2,700 south of Cambridge.

The Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) has various major construction or maintenance projects planned in Washington County. ITD schedules construction and maintenance projects for a six year period. These are subject to change should other priorities be discovered or if an emergency arises.

The interior of the county is served by 490 miles of paved and improved roads that are serviced regularly by the Washington County Road Department. Areas on the west end of the county (68 miles) are served by the Weiser Valley Highway District. The areas of Hitt Mountain and Cuddy Mountain are accessible through Forest Service and logging roads. Minimum right-of-way widths for new construction or development in the county must conform to the currently adopted county or road district standards.

Most of the rural dwellings of the county are within three miles of road access; however, in the Crane Creek area, there are some that are more than five miles from the nearest road.

There has been recent concern with conflict between agricultural uses and increased traffic on many roads. In the future, these concerns must be considered in all planning for development.

The county has adopted a subdivision ordinance requiring that all roads be constructed or improved to county or Weiser Valley Road District standards prior to being accepted into the respective road system.

The county and highway district have identified the following needs for transportation in Washington County:

1. In recent years the floodwaters have caused much damage to the transportation system in Washington County. Future transportation planning must include mitigation of flood impacts.
2. Road standards regarding construction and maintenance need to be in conformance with applicable jurisdictional standards within the county.
3. Future planning should include developing transportation systems that can effectively handle the increased requirements of that development.
4. Conflicts between agricultural and transportation needs must be addressed and mitigated. This includes farm to market roadway designations and recognition of open ranges and herd districts.
5. Standards for signs, access control and alternate access provisions for the transportation system in Washington County, most specifically regarding State Highway 71 and U.S. Highway 95, are subject to, and must be in conformance with, the requirements of the Idaho Transportation Department and Washington County ordinances.
6. Strategies should be developed where possible, to address current sub-standard roads in the county.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Airport	The cities of Midvale and Weiser have public airports serving those areas. The Weiser Municipal Airport is located on 86 acres three miles south of Weiser. It contains a 4,000 foot by 60 foot wide runway with a new hangar built in 2002 and provides refueling and maintenance.
Bus	The Veterans Administration bus transports veterans and eligible relatives from Weiser to Boise for services.
Senior Bus	The senior bus is available to transport seniors and disabled citizens in and around Weiser. Once a month, the bus service makes a trip to Ontario, Oregon. The Cambridge and Midvale senior bus provides similar services.
Railroad	The county is served by the Union Pacific Railroad. It provides spur lines to serve industrial and agricultural producers along the tracks. There is no passenger service available from Washington County or the surrounding area.
Freight Service	The area is served by several private trucking businesses providing freight service to the Washington County area, including overnight delivery services.

GOAL – To ensure that the roads and transportation systems in Washington County offer adequate access to facilitate effective use and preservation of the land and access for services, recreation and local markets.

To preserve the integrity of the transportation system through the preservation of existing and future highway corridors in order to avoid future costs and transportation conflicts.

Objectives

1. The present county roads and bridges should be maintained so that use is not reduced in any area of the county.
2. Standards should be developed for roads within the county including those for:
 - a) Private Signage (as it applies to transportation safety – not to include traffic control devices)
 - i. General Standards
 - ii. Lighting of private signs
 - iii. Site Obstructions
 - b) Access Control and Alternative Provision (such as frontage roads)
 - c) Maintenance
 - d) Construction
 - e) Utility use of the public right of way
3. Identify and develop an inventory addressing the following classifications:
 - a) School Routes
 - b) Current sub-standard roads (developing strategies to bring them up to standards-particularly as traffic on some of the paved roads increases)
 - c) Farm to market roads
 - d) Emergency access roads
 - e) Snow routes
 - f) Future (changing) functions of existing roads
4. Develop short and long term maintenance schedules for all county roads and bridges.
5. Land use planning should direct development along roads which are capable of handling the impact of that development. Impacts on the existing road system (both within and off-site of the development) caused by a new development which significantly degrades the useful life of such roadways, should be paid for by the developer. New roads needed by the development will be the responsibility of that developer.
6. Recognize the value of the road systems to the agricultural community and work to reduce conflicts between transportation needs of agriculture and non-agricultural pursuits.

7. Address the construction of roads and other transportation routes within floodplain areas and develop standards to avoid obstruction of the flood channel.
8. In transportation planning, preserve corridors of existing and future highway routes to ensure adequate right-of-way and to facilitate future traffic flow needs.
9. Encourage the Idaho Transportation Department to continually repair the state highways within the county.
10. Encourage the continued installation of safety-alternative improvements at railroad crossings within the county.
11. The county will not improve existing private roads to county standards.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural resources of Washington County are what has attracted man to this area, kept him here, and will sustain him in the future. While the natural resources can be divided into four main categories: animal, vegetable, mineral, and water, it is recognized that people are the county's greatest natural resource. The existence and uses of natural resources are greatly influenced by the climate and topography.

Wildlife: Washington County hosts a large variety of animal life. The native fish, birds, (both native and introduced) and mammals have always been a resource for fishermen, hunters, and trappers – both for recreation and commercial purposes. Introduced domestic species, such as cattle and sheep, have easily acclimatized to this area enabling ranching to become the primary economic enterprise of the county. The Idaho Fish and Game Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provide a list of “Rare Elements” which include sightings of rare birds, animals, and plant life by county. In Washington County different groups, including ranchers, biologists, government officials and citizens, have come together in an ongoing cooperative effort to protect and support wildlife and the environment.

Vegetation: Because of the wide variety of soil types and climate variations, Washington County supports a wide variety of plant life.

The native species vary from semi-arid to aquatic plants, evergreens and deciduous trees, annuals and perennials, fruit bearing, seed bearing and tuberous; broadleaves, and grasses. They provide a rich variety of food for both native and domestic animals on private as well as federally managed and state lands. The introduced vegetation in the form of crops has provided the second largest contributor to the economy of the county. Farmers produce a large variety of crops for both human and animal consumption.

Part of the vegetation has been the introduction of noxious weeds, including species that are not rated as noxious but are considered an invasive species that promote accelerated fire growth, in effect cheat grass. The control of these weeds, enforcement of weed policies and use of chemicals, have been an ongoing subject for discussion for county residents. County weed control efforts are managed by the Washington County Weed Department. The Lower Weiser River Cooperative Weed Management Area or CWMA is an association of county employees and landowners who work on county-wide weed management efforts. The CWMA functions under the direction of a ten-member Weed Advisory Board.

A portion of Washington County is forest and timber which provides value to the county. While timber is no longer the big industry it once was, it still provides needed employment for Washington County. Access to federally managed and state lands and the available grazing allotments are critical to a large segment of livestock production in Washington County.

Minerals/Soils: The general soils and geology sections describe in detail the various soil types and minerals found in Washington County. While farming and mining are the two obvious industries in the county that utilize the minerals found here, there is also a

notable amount of quarry work done to provide the minerals used in building and maintaining the public and private road system in the county. In addition, there are other potential natural resources in Washington County.

Water: Water is one of Washington County's most valuable natural resources. It is the essential element to maintain all life. All of the industries of the county rely on the continued use of water and depend on legally recognized rights to collect, distribute and use the water as it passes through the county. Any loss of historical rights to utilize water would have immediate negative consequences to the county both economically and socially.

Groundwater is the primary source of water for human consumption and in recent years has been increasingly developed for irrigation and development purposes. Depletion or contamination of the aquifer is a very real danger to the county and should be monitored closely. While the county does not have a direct hand in the monitoring of well permits in the county, the Idaho Department of Water Resources does not have an adequate system to stay on top of the potential problems that excessive well permits might create. If water is taken from an aquifer at a rate greater than its natural rate of recharge – it will become depleted.

In some areas of Washington County the ground water contains contaminants that are potentially hazardous to public health. There are wells in the county that indicate elevated levels of arsenic, nitrates and other contaminants. Land use decisions are affected by water quality and quantity issues.

Snowpack melt and spring seepage from the mountains of both Washington and Adams Counties are the primary source of surface water in the county. Seasonal rains also contribute to the surface water source. Diverted surface water was the first source of irrigation for the pioneer farmers of the county. It is still a major source of irrigation water. Conflict between irrigation conveyance systems and development must be carefully monitored. Development standards minimizing these conflicts need to be considered.

Reservoir water was later developed for agricultural purposes to provide irrigation water to an expanding farm community. It has proven to be a reliable source of water for irrigation, recreational activities, and domestic water supply.



Mann Creek Reservoir

An excellent source of non-polluting, renewable power has been developed by combining surface water and reservoir water through the dams on the Snake River, while enhancing the tax base of the county.

The ground water sources for the county include the Weiser and Snake River Plain Aquifer. Currently there exist many claims on the aquifer which could impact the water supply of Washington County residents. Potentials for contamination or pollution of the aquifer should be addressed.

GOAL – To protect and preserve the natural resources of the county while defending and maintaining the use and development of vitally important agricultural, commercial and recreational activities.

Objectives

1. Promote and encourage good stewardship of all natural resources through proper use and protection.
2. Promote and encourage cooperation of various entities desiring to use the natural resources in different ways.
3. Protect the beneficial historical and customary use, development and enhancement of natural resources.
4. Develop standards to minimize conflicts between development and irrigation systems.
5. Identify and address issues that threaten the water resources of the county, developing ways to mitigate conflict. Consider the impact of land use decisions upon the quality and quantity of water in Washington County.
6. State and federal agencies shall contact and coordinate with the county in these areas.
7. Strive to protect all natural resources from detrimental impacts.
8. Encourage multiple uses for natural resources.
9. Use all current available information when making decisions that could affect natural resources within the county.
10. Encourage development of water storage facilities in the county.
11. Maintain and update maps of high levels of nitrates and arsenic in Washington County.

HAZARDOUS AREAS

Washington County has adopted the International Building Code and the International Fire Code as amended by the state. All new buildings must meet applicable standards.

Floods

In order to minimize flood damage, it is the policy of Washington County to discourage building in the floodplain. The floodplain of the Weiser and Snake Rivers is fairly wide in the vicinity of Weiser. Lands adjoining the Weiser River are subject to periodic overflow. Floods in this area are generally caused by heavy rainstorms, rapid snowmelt, ice jams, or any combination of the aforementioned. The Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) is land in the floodplain within a community subject to a one percent (1%) or greater chance of flooding in any given year. For purposes of these regulations, the term "special flood hazard area" is synonymous in meaning with the phrase "area of special flood hazard".

Seasonal flood events commonly impact farmland productivity. The county must work with the Corps of Engineers, through Flood Control District #3, to plan for the future, develop standards for the building and maintenance of levees and pursue other measures to protect property and facilities. Support from public officials is needed to promote watershed management for controlling floodwater.

Landslides / Unstable Slopes

It is the policy of Washington County to discourage building on potentially unstable sloped property and may require engineering as a condition prior to the issuance of building permits.

Building on landslide prone areas is not allowed.

Fires

Washington County includes desert type areas (rangeland and barren land), agricultural land and forest areas. All of these land types can sustain a fire that could impact homes, businesses, and the environment.

Fire hazards cannot be completely avoided, but they can be mitigated. In the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), Firewise and the NFPA Wildfire Division help educate homeowners and encourage the use of fire resistant materials along with landscape planning, lessening threats through natural and man-made means. It is recommended that Washington County supports emergency actions in the event that a wildlands fire impacts the county.

Man-made hazards Potential man-made hazards in the county may come from the following sources:

1. Underground storage tanks that have not been removed or do not meet federal requirements for the prevention of leakage/contamination of the groundwater.
2. Storage of grains and other agricultural products.
3. Storage and use of chemicals in residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural operations, and the storage and use of chemicals at city treatment plants.
4. Hazardous material transported through the county.

Disaster Services The county has an emergency response office for response to both natural and man-made disasters. Funding for this office is essential to keep the county prepared.

GOAL – To minimize the loss of life and property due to natural disasters such as flood, fire, wind, earthquake, or landslide.

Objectives

1. Maintain and update, as required, a map of Washington County flood zones.
2. Strive to identify hazards and mitigate their impacts. Address identified hazards and the mitigation of such in all Washington County land use ordinances and plans.
3. Support and encourage the protection of air, land and water from pollution in Washington County.

PUBLIC SERVICES, FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

Health Facilities and Services

The Washington County area has health programs in schools as well as county funded and operated health and welfare services. Weiser Memorial Hospital is the only hospital in the county. Weiser Memorial Hospital (WMH) is a full service, 25-bed taxing district hospital that has been serving the health care needs of our region since it was established in 1950. The hospital is a not-for-profit community hospital with an elected seven-member Board of Trustees. As a taxing district, the hospital is supported in part by the Washington County taxpayers. Through the Washington County Hospital Taxing District, all tax revenues go back to the hospital's mission in the form of services, facilities, personnel, and equipment.

In 1991, the hospital grew to include the addition of a Surgical and Specialty Clinic. The clinic now provides Cardiology, Obstetrics and Gynecology, General Surgery, Podiatry, and Orthopedics.

In 2000, WMH was awarded designation as a Critical Access Hospital (CAH). In 2008, a state-of-the-art sleep study lab was added and in 2014, a family practice clinic, Family Medical Center, was added to the hospital campus.

Currently, Weiser Memorial Hospital offers a full spectrum of healthcare services with a staff of 100+ employees, 4 physicians, 2 physician assistants and 2 nurse practitioners practicing in our outpatient clinics. The hospital has 1 staff orthopedic surgeon.

The hospital's modern equipment includes the addition of a brand new CT scanner, which is the most modern CT technology in the Treasure Valley. Weiser Memorial Hospital is continually investing in highly skilled and compassionate staff, modern technology and equipment and a diversity of health care services to provide the best care possible to the communities it serves.

Numerous doctors have private practices in the county. There are four private elder care facilities in the county and a health clinic in Cambridge.

Ambulance and Fire District/Departments

There are four fire departments in Washington County, Weiser City, Weiser, Midvale and Cambridge Rural Fire Departments. The Midvale Fire Department also maintains a station at South Crane Creek and Weiser Rural Fire Department maintains a station on Jackson Road. A portion of southern Washington County is served by the Payette Rural Fire Department. The fire districts/departments cooperate in a mutual aid agreement with surrounding communities, counties and federal agencies.



Weiser Rural Fire District Building - Weiser

Currently, the areas of Midvale and Cambridge have their own ambulances. The Weiser area is serviced by the Weiser Ambulance District. All emergency services are dispatched by the county utilizing an enhanced 911 system. Washington County is also served by Life Flight. The county promotes the siting and establishment of permanent, maintained Life Flight landing areas. Washington County is dedicated to providing the best possible flight-based emergency services which might require and include siting partnerships with neighboring counties.

Police Protection

Washington County supports a Sheriff's Office with thirty-five staff members and a Sheriff. Facilities include a County Detention Center with capabilities for the detention of forty-nine people and a 24 hour operational dispatch and 911 center. Mobile units consist of thirteen patrol cars, one waterways pickup, two boats, two jet skis, two ATVs, one UTV, and two search and rescue vehicles. The Sheriff's Office includes a volunteer search and rescue unit available for search and rescue missions for missing and injured persons. In addition, Washington County has the benefit of Idaho State Police (manpower and equipment) for law enforcement within the county when requested by the Sheriff. The City of Weiser has its own police department.

Courts

The District Court and the Magistrate Court Annex in Weiser are the only court facilities in Washington County. The facility and manpower costs are shared by the three principal cities and Washington County. The Magistrate and District Courts have both been remodeled to serve the county's needs.

Domestic Water

Domestic and stock water supplies for the basin are derived chiefly from individual wells and springs. Permits are required from the Idaho Department of Water Resources for water usage. Municipal water supplies are obtained from both ground and surface-water sources. The cities of Cambridge and Midvale receive water from wells. The City of Weiser obtains water primarily from the Weiser River and secondarily from the Snake River. Most of the groundwater in the Weiser River basin is derived from precipitation falling within the drainage basin. Groundwater levels in the Weiser River basin fluctuate in response to snowmelt runoff, application of irrigation water, and groundwater pumping. Generally, the magnitude of these fluctuations is greatest in the sedimentary-rock aquifers and least in the basalt aquifers. Generally, water levels in wells in both these aquifers begin to rise in response to snowmelt runoff. Individual well owners are responsible for testing their wells for contaminants. Washington County recommends that all domestic wells are tested regularly.

Irrigation

Water rights applicable to a specific property are required for the use of surface water for irrigation. Within Washington County there are ten principal irrigation districts.

1. Weiser Irrigation District: Main source –Weiser River and Crane Creek Reservoir (Weiser River). This District serves approximately 14,000 acres.
2. Lower Payette Canal: Main Source – Payette River, Payette Lake and Cascade Reservoir. At present the system (approximately 11,500 acres) is adequate to meet the demand.

3. Sunnyside Irrigation Ditch Company: Main Source – Weiser River and Crane Creek, serves approximately 3,000 acres.
4. Mann Creek Irrigation District: Main Source – Mann Creek and Mann Creek Reservoir, serves approximately 4,000 acres.
5. Monroe Creek Irrigation District: Main Source – Monroe Creek and Mann Creek, serves approximately 1,000 acres.
6. Middle Valley Ditch Co.: Main Source – Weiser River and Lost Valley Reservoir, serves approximately 2,200 acres.
7. Cambridge Ditch Company – Served by Weiser River and Lost Valley Reservoir, serves approximately 1,828 acres.
8. Allison Jewel Ditch – Served by Weiser River and Lost Valley Reservoir. Approximately 1,340 acres are served by the Allison Jewel Ditch.
9. Little Weiser Irrigation District: Main Source – Little Weiser and C. Ben Ross Reservoir. The Little Weiser Irrigation District serves approximately 3,227 acres.
10. Pine Creek (Adjudicated water regulated by District 67 water master): Main Source – Pine Creek and Spring Creek, serves approximately 600 acres.
12. Rush Creek (Adjudicated water regulated by District 67 water master): Main Source – Rush Creek, serves approximately 1,000 acres.
13. Institute Canal Co: Main source – Weiser River and Crane Creek Reservoir. Water from the Galloway canal is delivered to their pump by Weiser Irrigation District, serves 900 acres.
14. West Ridge Irrigation District: Main Source – Snake River. Water from the Snake River is pumped by Weiser Irrigation District to West Ridge piping system, serves approximately 400 acres.
15. Weiser Cove Irrigation District: Main Source – Weiser River and Crane Creek Reservoir, serves 3,203 acres.
16. There are 3 irrigation districts in the City of Weiser - Middle Weiser Irrigation District, East Weiser Irrigation District, and West Weiser Irrigation District: Main Source – the Weiser Irrigation Districts Galloway Canal.

GOAL – To assure that all irrigation districts are active participants in all applicable land use decisions and are given the opportunity to lend their expertise and outline their requirements, contributing to more thorough overall land use decision making processes.

Solid Waste Disposal

Weekly garbage service is provided, for a fee, to rural Washington County by private disposal companies. There are two solid waste collection sites in the county: one two miles north of Weiser on U.S. Highway 95; and the other between Cambridge and Midvale on Stage Coach Road. Solid waste is transferred from these sites to the Payette County land fill at Clay Peak.

Libraries

There are three library systems in Washington County: the Weiser Library, the Cambridge Community Library and the Midvale Library.

Weiser Library The Weiser Public Library is located at 628 E 1st Street, in Weiser, Idaho. The library has its own levy, and is city-owned serving the city residents of Weiser. Rural residents who live outside the city limits must pay a fee to obtain library services. The library has approximately 31,747 items in its catalog available for check-out. The library has over 3,236 patrons with city cards and 522 patrons with rural cards. Interlibrary loan services, unlimited internet access on public computers, and a wide variety of DVDs and audio CDs are offered. The hours open for the public are 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday-Friday. The building is ADA accessible. The governing Board of Trustees is made up of five local citizens, serving five year terms. The staff is made up of one full time librarian (who is now temporarily part-time) and three part-time staff employees.



Weiser Public Library - Weiser

Cambridge Library

The Cambridge Community Library is located in Cambridge and serves the northern portions of the county. Non-residents of that area may participate upon paying a non-resident fee. The Cambridge Library District offers a public library with a 10,000 volume collection including electronic and audio tapes. Internet access is available as well. This district was formed in 1974 and qualifies as a sub-unit of government with taxing authority under Idaho Codes. It is open from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday, to serve the citizens. The library building is currently ADA accessible. The library currently has six part time staff members. Board members serve a term of six years, and have the final say on all things that affect the library. The library director is responsible for the daily operations of the library and supervises staff. The director answers to the library board.

**Midvale
Library**

The Midvale library is located at 70 E. Bridge St. in Midvale, and is a library district serving portions of the county from Mann Creek, almost to Cambridge. Non-residents of the area may participate upon paying a non-resident fee. E-books are offered free to patrons with a library card. There are youth services available including story hour, family reading events and a summer reading program. The library has approximately 12,700 volumes and 350 patrons with library cards (only a few are non-resident patrons). The library offers interlibrary loan services, audio and video choices, Internet access and a popular local history section. It is open Monday through Friday from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, to serve the citizens. There is a small meeting room available for use. The library building is currently ADA accessible. A five-member citizen's board, serving six-year terms (one is up for election each year) oversees the operation of the Midvale library.

Utilities

1. Telephone Services
2. Idaho Power
3. Intermountain Gas Co.
4. Internet

Facilities

1. Vendome Events Center (Weiser)
2. Senior Citizens Center (Weiser)
3. Fred Hust Rodeo Grounds (Weiser)
4. VFW Hall/Community Center (Midvale)
5. Midvale/Cambridge Senior Center (Cambridge)
6. Washington County Fairgrounds and Exhibit Hall (Cambridge)



Washington County Exhibition Building - Cambridge

GOAL – To ensure residents are provided with facilities and services at a reasonable cost, and are not adversely affected by land use decision processes.

GOAL – To promote cooperation and coordination of all countywide services.

Objectives

1. Develop underground and overhead utility placement policy.
2. Work with all agencies in an attempt to provide reliable services among the jurisdictions.
3. Encourage jurisdictions to coordinate efforts and services. Encourage improved communication systems between agencies working within the county.
4. Research financing alternatives for funding public infrastructure and facilities such as impact fees.
5. Encourage the development of coordinated financing and capital improvement plans between taxing districts providing services in the county.
6. Continually update subdivision design standards to meet public facility goals and needs.

HOUSING

Washington County is at an important crossroads. Historically the county has experienced slow to moderate growth patterns; however, increasing numbers of people are moving to the county from other states and from other parts of Idaho making the need to plan for growth even more critical to Washington County's long term quality of life. The county should look to the future and plan and design for growth of housing in areas that best meet the needs of our communities, our service providers and the population of Washington County.

In developing a land use plan, the county needs to identify and zone land for its optimal use. Housing and commercial uses should be directed to that land considered marginal for agricultural use. An evaluation should be completed prior to approval of housing development regarding the impacts to any and all jurisdictions and service providers.

The US Census figures indicate the following housing trends in the county (includes households in incorporated cities):

	1980	1990	2000	2017
Total Units	3,605	3,685	4,138	4,622
Mobile Homes, RV, Van	288	514	656	478
Owner Occupied	2,773	2,370	2,360	2,910
Renter Occupied	794	897	989	1,069
Median Housing Value	\$33,600	\$43,700	\$90,200	\$149,100
Median Monthly Rent	\$123	\$183	\$457	\$658

Source: 2010 Census and 2017 American Community Survey

Washington County's proximity to Ada, Canyon, Payette, and Gem County increases the likelihood that it will receive the spillover of the rapid growth in those counties. Rapid growth continues to increase the cost of land and housing. Since 2010, the median housing value has increased to \$149,100. According to local realtors, the median selling price of one to five acre parcels in the county in 2019 is \$38,500.

In 1998, the Washington County Housing Task Force completed a report on the status of housing in the county. This report fully inventoried housing types and opportunities as well as other housing factors such as financing. Some recommendations included in this report are:

1. New growth should pay for itself.
2. Housing should not be placed in areas with insufficient potable water or sewage disposal capacity.
3. Development/design criteria for subdivisions should be regularly updated and reviewed.

Note: To a greater or lesser degree these recommendations are still valid today.

GOAL - To identify and zone land for its optimal use, to create an environment for adequate housing.

Objectives

1. To encourage residential subdivisions in those areas that least impact existing agricultural uses.
2. Develop land use classifications which will direct residential subdivisions to areas that have minimal impact on county services. Encourage the clustering of housing units in the county on marginal farm ground. Direct development in the county to pre-determined preferred areas of specified use.
3. Monitor and renegotiate as necessary, areas of city impact agreements with cities in the county.
4. Continue to utilize the International Building Code and Idaho Residential Energy Standards in housing construction in Washington County.

RECREATION

Washington County recognizes the importance of wildlife and the environment not only to the citizens, but also to the overall economy of the county. The pursuit of recreational opportunities is an important component of the economy of Washington County. Abundant wildlife and close access to the environment are important assets of the county. One of the main reasons people move to Washington County is to enjoy its recreational opportunities. Wildlife and the environment are important natural resources and the county shall encourage the protection and conservation of these assets.

Historically, outdoor recreational pursuits in Washington County mostly consisted of hunting, fishing, camping and picnicking. As time went on, the list of outdoor opportunities greatly increased. These other uses include, but are not limited to, the following: skiing, snowmobile riding, pleasure boating, water skiing, swimming, off-road motorcycle riding, ATV riding, bicycling, hiking, backpacking, rock hunting, mushrooming, recreational mining, trapping, photography, bird and wildlife watching, sightseeing, driving for pleasure, and horseback riding.



Olds Ferry Sand Dunes - Weiser

Trout are caught from the creeks, rivers, lakes and reservoirs in Washington County. Sturgeon is native to the Snake River. Salmon and steelhead returned to the county to spawn prior to the construction of Brownlee Dam. After the creation of Brownlee Reservoir, the recreational use of the Snake River has shown a tremendous increase. Catfish, perch, crappie, blue gill, largemouth and small-mouth bass are other species which are regularly caught by anglers in Washington County.

Deer, elk, bear, wolves, and mountain lion offer big game hunting opportunities. Pronghorn antelope are also present, but not in huntable numbers at the present time.

Ring-necked pheasants, certain species of grouse, quail, chukar, Hungarian partridge, wild turkey, and cottontail rabbit offer seasonal upland hunting opportunities.

Coyote, wolves, red fox, bobcat, muskrat, mink, raccoon, and beaver are available for those who pursue fur-bearers.

Scenery ranges from mountain to desert, for those artists who paint or use a camera. Indianhead Mountain is a landmark which has been featured in many photographs and paintings, both by local and nationally known artists.

Brownlee Reservoir, Mann Creek Reservoir, Crane Creek Reservoir, Paddock Valley Reservoir, the Snake River, the Weiser River, and all their tributaries are used by those seeking water-related recreation.

Several public agencies manage lands in Washington County. Campgrounds, picnic areas, roads and trails are all used extensively, many in all seasons. Public campgrounds include: Steck Park, Paradise, Justrite, Lower Spring Creek, Brownlee, and Woodhead.

Approximately 45% of the land in Washington County is managed by government agencies. The presence of these lands affords local residents and visitors alike some unique recreational opportunities. Some of these include:

1. Paddock Reservoir – includes boating ramps, camping, fishing.
2. Mann Creek Reservoir – camping, boating, and fishing.
3. Weiser River – watercraft launch sites and various fishing opportunities.
4. Steck Park – camping, boat launch.
5. Woodhead Park/Brownlee Reservoir – camping, boat launch.
6. Whiskey Rapids – undeveloped boat camping site.
7. Weiser Sand Dunes – off-highway vehicle park, undeveloped.
8. Snake River Boat Launch – undeveloped boat launch and campsite.
9. Other – scattered sites along the river for boat camping including Rock Creek.

10. Weiser River Trail – A railroad corridor extending from Weiser to Adams County line, traversing over 80% through private property has been rail banked. It is presently managed privately by Friends of the Weiser River Trail, a non-profit organization, as a recreation trail.

Use of these sites and other general use of federally managed land for hunting, fishing, walking, photography, nature walks and other recreational activities numbers over 160,000 visits per year. In 2018 the county received \$920,135 in payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) since the federal government does not pay property taxes. The county does spend funds to maintain some of the public access roads on federal land.

As time has gone by, people have found themselves with more time and money to spend on recreational pursuits. Therefore, use of federally managed lands and water for recreation has increased as well.



Brownlee Reservoir from Woodhead Park

Businesses which cater to the recreation needs of the local area have developed and continue to show increased sales of recreation equipment and services. There are businesses which rely almost entirely on recreational users for their livelihood. Hunting and fishing supplies, camping gear, backpacking equipment, gasoline, food and lodging are all purchased locally by recreationists. Washington County welcomes the outdoor recreational enthusiast while protecting and conserving the wildlife and wildlands. The county promotes the dedication and maintenance of public access while defending the rights of the private property owner. The county promotes the enjoyment of the rural lifestyle, while protecting critical habitat.

Recreation Revenues

	Washington County	Idaho
Power boating (2016)	\$4,352,799	\$335,325,397
Snowmobiling (2017)	\$359,687	\$197,531,518
Off-Highway Vehicles (2012)	\$100,000	\$186,000,000

Source: Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

According to economic impact studies done by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, 43.8% of spending on power boating and 16.7% of spending on snowmobiling in Washington County was done by non-residents.



Boat Launch Facility, Woodhead Park - Brownlee Reservoir

GOAL – To ensure that there are adequate recreational facilities available to the residents of Washington County and that all land use decisions and actions take into consideration potential impacts on recreation usage.

Objectives

1. To develop park and recreational facilities and programs to optimum standards based on local needs.
2. To create better and more varied opportunities for indoor and outdoor recreation and the enjoyment of leisure time by people of all ages and preferences.

3. To set aside for perpetual public use an adequate amount of river frontage and other places, as possible, which have historic recreational and other values.
4. To consider joint education programs offered by local, state and federal government representatives and interested citizens for open space.
5. To develop regulations to ensure orderly development of resources as well as to balance land use distribution. Encourage zoning and other development standards for recreational needs.
6. The county shall consider the following issues:
 - a. To properly identify recreation potential and scenic points of interest.
 - b. To expand existing recreation facilities.
 - c. To develop new recreation facilities.
 - d. To anticipate and identify the recreation needs and problems which will confront the county.
7. To require that all state and federal agencies consider recreational impacts when proposing any project.
8. Multiple use of access to all federally managed lands shall be preserved.
9. Recreation and uses involved in making a living should be balanced and compatible.
10. The Board of County Commissioners should continue to review plans associated with federally managed lands and advise and inform the public.
11. To be fully involved in the relicensing process by Idaho Power for the Hells Canyon Complex. This will afford opportunities for recreational planning along the river.

SPECIAL AREAS OR SITES

The citizens of Washington County have identified several sites within their county that have special or historical significance to them. These are listed on Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 2 lists the historical sites in Washington County on the National Register of Historical Places.

GOAL – To maintain areas of interest in the county whether for lessons in education, historical preservation or simply to maintain a sense of history.

Objectives

1. Encourage private owners of these sites to recognize their significance to the county and preserve them as much as possible.
2. To keep a historic record of each site for future generations.
3. To consider the possibility of additional sites being named on the National Historic Register.
4. All land use decisions shall include consideration of historical sites.

Exhibit 1: WASHINGTON COUNTY SIGNIFICANT SITES

Archeological	Olds Ferry Dunes Galloway Street Park St/Hwy 95/Monroe Creek Site	Braden Midvale Site Complex
Geological	Mineral Dennet Creek	Idaho Almaden (Cinnebar) Mine S. Crane Ck Road at Nutmeg Mountain Iron Mountain
Historical	Indianhead Cobb Rapids Campbell's Hot Springs, 7 miles NW of Weiser The Old "Red Store" Galloway Canal Salubria Townsite –Cambridge Goodall Cutoff Trail System Dixie Creek Bridge	Weiser Bridge Weiser Brick Company, NW corner of Indianhead and Hwy. 95 Fred Hust Rodeo Grounds, Weiser Weiser Flour Mill Washington County Fairgrounds, Cambridge Pacific and Northern Railroad/Weiser River Trail Unity Bridge
Cemeteries	Hillcrest – Weiser Galloway – Weiser Monroe Creek – Private Land Mann Creek – Weiser Keithley Creek – Midvale Eastside - Midvale Mineral – Dennet Creek - Weiser	Reed – Private land Crane Creek (Zittercobb) – Private land Salubria – Cambridge Rush Creek – Private Land Cow Creek – Private Land Walker – Private Land Cambridge Cemetery - Cambridge
Architectural	Oregon Short Line Depot Intermountain Institute Buildings Billings Memorial Gymnasium Slocum Hall Hooker Hall Carnegie Library Beardsley Hall Jane Slocum's Home	Greycote, Home of Edward Anson Paddock Middle School Gymnasium Oldest cabin in Weiser (on museum grounds) Weiser Post Office E.D Ford residence, south of Weiser Ed Shainwald residence, 404 Main Charles Hinze residence, 253 w. Main Louis Vial residence, 341 East Main



Hooker Hall – Snake River Heritage Center, Weiser

Exhibit 2: WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SITES

Current listings (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Name on the Register ^[5]	Image	Date listed ^[6]	Location	City or town
<u>Anderson–Elwell House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000373)	547 W. 1st St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Baptist Church</u>		October 7, 1977 (#77000470)	E. Main and 8th Sts.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Butterfield Livestock Company House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000374)	North of Weiser on Jenkins Creek Rd.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Cambridge News Office</u>		December 28, 1989 (#89002128)	155 N. Superior St.	<u>Cambridge</u>
<u>Col. C. F. Drake House</u>		January 20, 1978 (#78001104)	516 E. Main St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Edwards–Gillette Barn</u>		February 19, 2002 (#02000013)	3059 Rush Creek Rd.	<u>Cambridge</u>

Name on the Register ^[5]	Image	Date listed ^[6]	Location	City or town
<u>James M. Fisher House</u>		September 4, 1986 (#86002146)	598 Pioneer Rd.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Thomas C. Galloway House</u>		January 26, 1978 (#78001105)	1120 E. 2nd St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Bernard Haas House</u>		May 22, 1978 (#78001106)	377 E. Main St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Herman Haas House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000375)	253 W. Idaho St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Institute Canal Company Pump House</u>		May 8, 2017 (#100000958)	South end of Fairview St. at the Galloway Canal	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Intermountain Institute</u>		November 1, 1979 (#79000811)	Paddock Ave.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Jewell Building</u>		January 18, 1990 (#89002263)	15 N. Superior St.	<u>Cambridge</u>

Name on the Register ^[5]	Image	Date listed ^[6]	Location	City or town
<u>Knights of Pythias Lodge Hall</u>		May 13, 1976 (#76000683)	30 E. Idaho St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Kurtz-Van Sicklin House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000376)	253 W. Main St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Archie Larsen House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000377)	South of Weiser on Larsen Rd.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>G. V. Nesbit House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000378)	308 W. Liberty St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Dr. J. R. Numbers House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000379)	240 W. Main St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>St. Agnes Catholic Church</u>		July 24, 1978 (#78001107)	204 E. Liberty St.	<u>Weiser</u>

Name on the Register ^[5]	Image	Date listed ^[6]	Location	City or town
<u>St. Luke's Episcopal Church</u>		July 24, 1978 (#78001108)	E. 1st and Liberty Sts.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Salubria Lodge No. 31</u>		March 9, 1990 (#90000368)	85 W. Central Blvd.	<u>Cambridge</u>
<u>Morris Sommer House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000380)	548 W. 2nd St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Mary Elizabeth Sommercamp House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000381)	411 W. 3rd St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Star Theater</u>		November 30, 1999 (#99001413)	342 State St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>B. S. Varian House</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000382)	241 W. Main St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Washington County Courthouse</u>		September 28, 1987 (#87001602)	E. Court St.	<u>Weiser</u>

Name on the Register ^[5]	Image	Date listed ^[6]	Location	City or town
<u>Benjamin Watlington House</u>		April 26, 1991 (#91000458)	206 W. Court St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Weiser Oregon Short Line Railroad Depot</u>		February 7, 2007 (#07000006)	1 State St.	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Weiser Post Office</u>		November 17, 1982 (#82000383)	Main and W. 1st St	<u>Weiser</u>
<u>Wilson House</u>		January 6, 2004 (#03001369)	75 N. 5th St.	<u>Cambridge</u>

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Washington County currently has developed design standards through the adoption of the following ordinances:

- Subdivision Ordinance
- Zoning Ordinance
- Building and Fire Codes
- Flood Control Ordinance

GOAL – To encourage development of an aesthetically pleasing, safe, functional and efficient county.

Objectives

1. Community forestry standards, in the planting and care of appropriate trees and landscaping, should be encouraged in the residential areas and required in industrial and commercial areas.
2. Continue to develop and enforce commercial signage standards to provide a safe and pleasing atmosphere in the commercial areas.
3. Enhance the image of Washington County as a good place to live, work and visit.
4. Washington County recognizes its duties/obligations to enforce the state noxious weed law and is working towards compliance with all landowners/stakeholders within all areas of the county through cooperative weed management area agreements.
5. Encourage beautification projects and practices throughout the county. Put particular emphasis on the beautification of transportation corridors and entryways into the county and the cities within the county.
6. Encourage the development of standards to address such issues as abandoned vehicles, junkyards, sight triangles and other general nuisances. Priority and emphasis should be given to those issues that specifically affect health, safety or the economic values of surrounding properties.
7. Encourage open space standards in the subdivision and zoning ordinances, addressing park and green spaces within the county. Encourage corridors and open areas in which children can play away from streets and roads.
8. Continue to coordinate with health authorities in identifying and enforcing standards related to health issues.
9. Encourage the development of a litter ordinance.
10. Develop proper standards and enforce animal control issues.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Washington County Comprehensive Plan anticipates growth five to ten years into the future, which allows time for implementation of land use management goals, transportation networks and facility plans. Implementation is the phase of the planning process that makes the goals and policies, as stated in the Comprehensive Plan, become reality. The plan, no matter how good it may be, is a useless document if it is never used or implemented. Formal adoption of the plan is the first step in implementation.

Prioritization of tasks does not mean that some are more important than others, simply that some have more urgency and/or the length of time needed to implement them dictates their priority. Therefore, a high priority should be given to goals and objectives that are in the development stage, while medium priority means that there is more study required and it may take longer to implement. Low priority indicates that a task may be completed over a longer period of time.

Board shall indicate the Board of County Commissioners, P & Z shall indicate the County Planning and Zoning Commission in the county.

GOAL STATEMENT – Execute this Comprehensive Plan as a vital working document as it guides future growth of Washington County.

Glossary of Planning Terms

ADA Accessible: Requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act for accessibility for those with mental or physical disabilities.

Area of City Impact: Section 67-6526, Idaho Code, the Local Land Use Planning Act, requires that cities and counties adopt a map identifying an area of impact within the unincorporated area of the county. The city and county must also identify the ordinances which will apply in the identified area, whether city, county, or a combination of both.

Block Grants: Grants available from the federal or state government, usually designated for the purpose of improving infrastructure or public facilities.

Comprehensive Plan: A plan guiding the future development of a county or city and based upon the stated long term goals and objectives of the community. The plan is the result of public input, study and analysis of existing conditions and a projection of what future conditions are likely to be. The plan shall contain fourteen elements as defined in the Local Land Use Planning Act, Title 67, Chapter 65, Idaho Code.

Special Use Permit: Certain uses, because of their size, special requirements, safety hazards or other features, which may have detrimental effects on the surrounding properties, but may be compatible with the other uses if they are properly designed and sited. A special use permit may be granted after careful review by the county and the placement of certain standards or conditions upon it, making the use acceptable within the area it is being proposed.

Density: The number of housing units per unit of land usually expressed as “per acre.” Density is controlled through zoning, based upon direction provided in the comprehensive plan.

Easement: An easement is a right granted by the owner of land to another party for a specific limited use of the land.

Greenbelt or Greenway: Areas designated as open space usually including a walking path, or other passive recreational opportunities.

Goal: A broad statement of what ought to exist in a community or what is desired to be achieved in the future, usually determined through citizen involvement.

Infrastructure: Includes physical improvements of a public nature such as roads, water and sewer systems, and utilities.

Land Use: A term used to indicate the utilization of any piece of land. The way in which land is being used is the land use. A land use plan reflects the proposed or projected utilization of land, usually presented in map form.

Land Use Policies: Those policies, plans and ordinances set forth by the governing body to guide decisions in land use within the county.

Local Land Use Planning Act: Title 67, Chapter 65 of the Idaho Code, formerly known as the Local Planning Act of 1975, is the state-enabling legislation which provides authority for cities and counties to undertake planning and zoning activities.

Nuisance Waiver: The waiver allowed by Idaho Code 22-4504, allowing counties to adopt a waiver procedure to be recorded with the county recorder pursuant to residential divisions of property and recognizes that any agricultural operation operated in accordance with generally recognized agricultural practices not to be a nuisance.

Non-Conforming Uses: Lots, structures or uses of land which are currently prohibited under the terms of the zoning ordinance, but were lawful at the date of the enactment of the zoning ordinance. They may be continued or given reasonable time to conform to the ordinance.

Quality of Life: Standards that a community sets which preserve qualities and condition that are deemed desirable for living in the community.

Open Space: Land with no or minimal development uses (such as golf courses, parks, agricultural areas) or land left undeveloped for aesthetic, environmental or public health and safety reasons (greenbelts, floodways, steep slopes, wetlands).

Ordinance: A legislative enactment of a county or city. It is a governmental statute or regulation, adopted by the city or county and published in the local newspaper.

Planned Unit Development: This is a development which is pre-planned in its entirety with the subdivision and zoning controls applied to the whole development rather than individual lots. This allows densities to be calculated for the whole development, usually permitting clustered development and open spaces.

Planning: The process of setting development goals and policies, gathering information, evaluating that information and developing alternatives for future action based upon the previous analysis.

Ranges: Washington County has both open range and herding districts. These two types of ranges determine who is responsible financially for damage caused by livestock.

Roads: A right-of-way which provides access to adjacent properties the dedication of which has been officially accepted. The term “road” also includes the terms highways, thoroughfares, parkway, street, avenue, boulevard, land, place and other such terms.

- a) Minor, a road that has the primary purpose of providing access to abutting properties.
- b) Collector, a road designated for the purpose of carrying traffic from the minor roads to the other collecting roads and/or arterial roads.
- c) Arterial, a road designated for the purpose of carrying fast and/or heavy traffic between communities.
- d) Farm to market, a road designated as a route from the outlying agricultural areas to bring products into the cities/communities.

Setback Requirements: The distance from the property line, required by ordinance, which a building must set.

Species of Special Concern: A plant or animal species whose future existence is considered threatened, and whose candidacy for future placement on the endangered species list is a possibility.

Subdivision: Subdivision is the process and result of laying out a parcel of undeveloped land into lots, blocks, street and public areas. A subdivision plat is required when a parcel of land is divided into a defined number of parcels (Idaho Code Title 50, Chapter 13, defines a subdivision as a parcel of land divided into five or more lots for development purposes – local ordinances may be more restrictive). A subdivision ordinance is the local code delineating subdivision requirements, design and improvements.

Taking: Taking of property is the appropriation by the government of private land for which compensation must be paid. Under the U.S. Constitution, property may not be condemned through eminent domain for public use or public purpose without just compensation. The courts have ruled that regulations preventing the reasonable use of a property could be regarded as a taking and requires compensation.

Telecommuting: A term used to describe those in the workforce that work from their place of residence through the use of a computer, phone fax or other electronic means.

Zoning: Zoning is the process by which a county or city legally controls the use of property and physical configuration of development upon tracts of land within its jurisdiction. Zoning is an exercise of police power and as such must be enacted for the protection of public health, safety and welfare. A zoning ordinance is the local law adopted by the city or county to ensure orderly development in accordance with specific standards set to protect public health, safety and welfare, taking into consideration SC 67-80.